

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MEETING OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SESSION

October 4, 2007

The Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council ("STAC") met on Thursday, October 4, 2007 in Public Session at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Providence, Rhode Island pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Members and public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island Law.

The following Members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Dr. Joseph Amaral, Dr. Clyde Briant (Co-Chair), Mr. Paul Choquette, Ms. Kimball Hall, Dr. David Hibbitt, Mr. Saul Kaplan, Dr. Arthur Klein, Dr. Richard Nadolink, Dr. Thomas Rockett, Dr. Jeffrey Seemann (Co-Chair).

Members absent were Dr. Margaret Leinen, Mr. Thomas Ryan and Mr. Donald Stanford

Also present were Governor Carcieri, and members of the Governor's and RIEDC's staff. Drs. Briant and Seemann presided over the meeting.

Welcome

Dr. Briant called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. by introducing a new Council member, Dr. Arthur Klein, Senior Vice President and Chief Physician Officer for Lifespan. This open seat was created when Mr. Daniel Martin of Raytheon resigned due to increased responsibilities within his corporation. Dr. Briant wished Mr. Martin the best in his new position and welcomed Dr. Klein

Dr. Seemann then recognized legislative leaders Rep. Eileen Naughton and Rep. Gordon Fox who have been strong supporters of STAC. He also introduced Governor Carcieri who stressed not only is the work of the Council important but that it is getting more urgent. Rhode Island and the United States are under increasingly competitive economic pressure and must endeavor to initiate collaborative efforts to leverage our strengths. Also, in light of the difficult budget cycle Rhode Island faces, STAC's efforts to build an innovation economy become increasingly important.

Approval of Minutes

Citing no changes, upon a motion duly made by Mr. Choquette and seconded by Dr. Amaral the minutes of the April 25, 2007 STAC meeting were accepted.

State EPSCoR Governance Committee

Dr. Seemann introduced the next order of business which pertained to the RI State EPSCoR Governance Committee. Established in February 2004, RI EPSCoR works to build partnerships between state government, institutions of higher education and industry to effect lasting improvements in statewide research infrastructure and national R&D competitiveness. The current NSF EPSCoR grant requires the appointment of a State Committee to provide advice and guidance for the program. STAC since its inception has effectively acted in this capacity to make certain that EPSCoR funded programs are clearly integrated and aligned with the state's research infrastructure and economic development objectives. STAC co-chairs Drs. Briant and Seemann administer the EPSCoR program as Co-Principal Investigators and the standing state committee, which was formed to develop and submit the EPSCoR grant, is comprised of STAC members. As an administrative measure upon a motion duly made by Dr. Briant and seconded by Mr. Choquette, the Council voted to formally accept the role of the RI State EPSCoR Committee.

URI Commission

Hon. Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Chair of the URI Commission for Research and Innovation, presented a progress report on the Commission which is charged with proposing specific actions to strengthen the position of the University of Rhode Island as a nationally competitive public research university and a key institution in Rhode Island's effort to strengthen its innovation economy. Since the last Council meeting in April, the Chair has worked with the appointing authorities to name the full Commission and to develop an outline of the timeline and methodology for its work. The first meeting of the Commission will be October 12, 2007 and the Commission anticipates completing its work in advance of the September 2008 deadline set forth by statute. To produce a set of recommendations, the Commission will gather information on the status and structure of research capacity at URI, collect best practices regionally, nationally and internationally for competitive research and produce a report of actionable items.

Mr. Choquette requested that the Chair continue to provide regular updates on the progress of the Commission and Mr. Flanders agreed.

Research Alliance

Dr. Briant introduced the next agenda item which included two presentations regarding STAC initiatives to increase Rhode Island's statewide research platform. The first presenter was RI Research Alliance Collaborative Grant awardee Dr. Eric Hall of Rhode Island College who provided a first-hand account of how the 2007 Research Alliance grant funding allowed his team to pursue and receive \$1.46 million in follow-on funding from NIH for their study on the relationship between radiation therapy and permanent damage in patients with testicular cancer. On this grant, Dr. Mary Hixon of Brown University served as PI and Dr. Sarah Spinnette of Rhode Island College joined Dr. Hall as a Co-PI. Dr. Hall recounted how important the funding was to continue his research

project. He also noted how the funding allowed him to include students in the project and recounted the astounding effect the involvement had on students' enthusiasm and development of career goals. Dr. Rockett commented that research can coexist in a higher education setting with teaching and that indeed he believed that the experiential element of research is a very real element of teaching. Mr. Kaplan also noted that by supporting cross-institutional collaborations, Rhode Island is developing what he sees as "collaboration muscle."

The second speaker was Michael Cassidy, President and CEO of the Georgia Research Alliance (GRA). GRA is highly regarded as a leader in the area of building regional research capacity. Mr. Cassidy presented a history of the Georgia model and explained what he considers to be the critical elements of a sustainable regional research alliance -- one that can foster and support technological innovation and new company creation.

GRA was founded by interested parties in academia, government and the private sector who believed that they could only successfully compete for large national R&D grants if they worked collaboratively to strengthen Georgia's research infrastructure. The group raised funding from private and government sources to recruit top talent (human capital) and increase physical facilities at six Atlanta-area institutions. The goal was to secure NIH- and NSF-like funding and to create new IP. This approach has been sustained over the last two decades due to the continued commitment by all partners. Recently, GRA introduced a new program called Venture Lab. This was developed in response to identification of a growing gap between growing knowledge base and new company creation through commercialization of research.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

There being no further business in Public Session, upon a motion duly made by Mr. Kaplan and seconded by Dr. Seemann, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Christine M.B. Smith
Secretary